



Women's and Gender Studies

By Rose Holz, WGS Associate Director

From the Director

Margaret Jacobs

Greetings from the Women's and Gender Studies office. Many things have happened this past year, but our big news this spring is that we have secured more stable funding for the Women's and Gender Studies Program. After 30 years at UNL, it looks like we will continue for many years to come.

When I became director of Women's and Gender Studies in August, I learned very quickly just how much work our program does and just how little money we have to finance it. This is an old story that we are all familiar with; work that women do or that is important to women is often undervalued and underpaid. We do it anyway because we care about it. (Mary Beck cared about it so much that she designed and taught our Women, Gender, and Science course for five years with no compensation!).

Thus, in an effort to stabilize our program and to teach all of our classes (including our important new pilot courses on activism, feminist theory, and LGBTQ studies, all of whose funding was set to expire), Rose Holz, Barbara DiBernard, Chantal Kalisa, and

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"No Limits 2007: A Fond Look Backwards"

Now that "No Limits 2007" is over, I can take the time to look over the past nine months with a surprising amount of fondness. This comes as no small amount of surprise, since I had officially sworn off conferences several years ago. I guess this goes to show that even disgruntled adolescents can still learn a few new tricks. But as you probably already know, this year's conference ("The Personal, the Political, and the Patriotic: No Limits 2007") borrowed upon the feminist slogan of the 1970s as a way to reclaim and celebrate the possibilities of dissent through artistic expression and political activism. More than 120 people registered for the event. For those of you who were unable to attend, however, here is what you missed:

- poet and scholar tatiana de la tierra -- whose funny and eloquent address entitled, "Dreaming of Lesbos in Times of Holy Terror," not only moved the audience but made them laugh, and the reception which followed in the Sheldon's Great Hall was simply beautiful;
- Amy Miller of ACLU Nebraska -- whose luncheon presentation entitled, "Applied Lessons from the ACLU," was deeply moving as well as she recounted stories of prisoner abuse and legislative battles over gay adoption rights;
- 39 student presentations from a wide variety of disciplines relating to women, gender, and feminism. Presenters came from UNL, UNO, UNK, Nebraska Wesleyan, University of Kansas-Lawrence, and Buena Vista University;
- live music sponsored by our student organization (the WSA, now SAGE) -- 4 local bands played at UNL's Culture Center;
- and an organizational fair with booths set up by the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, Ten Thousand Villages, League of Women Voters, Voices of Hope, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), Friendship Home, Women's Center, and local artists -- Kim Matthews (producer of "The Female Spectacle: A Cerebral Burlesque") and Glenda Dietrich Moore (whose artwork can be found on our conference poster).

And while we know there are areas in which we can still improve, evaluation forms filled out by attendees indicate more than a few rave reviews. Here are some of the things people said: "Wonderful, fun, thought-provoking;" "I loved tatiana de la tierra and how she spoke so fluidly about sexuality;" "Tatiana's presentation was fantastic! It's great to hear women artists' points of view;" "Excellent variety of themes;" "Amy Miller was wonderful;" "A highlight was meeting some wonderful feminists -- girls and guys;" "This was the first WS conference I have attended and I loved it. This was a unique experience compared with conferences of other disciplines and I felt a greater sense of community;" "Keep doing it!" and "Looking forward to next year."

But to the one person who added with great enthusiasm that they wished it could be held here "every year," I have only this reply: thanks but no. But do check out "No Limits 2008," which will be held next year at University of Nebraska - Kearney.

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Ms. Nthabiseng Motsemme Lecture

“Loving in a Time of Hopelessness: On Township Women’s Subjectivities in a Time of HIV/AIDS”

By Tamy Burnett, Doctoral Student, English and WGS

The first Women’s and Gender Studies Colloquium speaker of the Spring 2007 semester, Ms. Nthabiseng Motsemme, is an International Ford Fellow and a Visiting Scholar of Sociology at DePaul University. During the presentation, the Colonial room at the Nebraska Union was filled with an audience held captive by Motsemme’s soft voice and powerful stories of life in South African townships.

Motsemme’s research was conducted through interviews with women living in township areas of South Africa. The women’s testimony eloquently explained what it means to live and love in a time of AIDS-inspired terror and grief. Motsemme described that women she had interviewed spoke frequently of the high death toll from AIDS and that finding someone who has not lost a friend, loved one, or community acquaintance to AIDS is the exception not the rule. The inescapable specter of the slow, lingering, dignity-absent death AIDS offers, Motsemme argued, profoundly affects the lives of everyone—from the wisest elder to the most carefree child. Western cultures, for whom this scenario is so foreign, face fundamental challenges in accurately and honestly understanding the subjectivities—goals, priorities, decision-making processes—for the women in this part of the world.

As a result, Motsemme identified the major failures of current Western-based NGO efforts to offer AIDS relief. Many of these failures are grounded in flawed cultural assumptions about the universality of motivations for high-risk behaviors, sexual and otherwise. For example, Western culture inextricably links the choice to engage in sexual behavior with love and long term commitment, suggesting that abstinence is an easy and clear choice outside of a committed relationship. Motsemme argued that such a view ignores the fundamental essence of living in a time of omnipresent violence, ever-escalating HIV infection rates, overwhelming AIDS-related grief, and general hopelessness. Motsemme asked: In such an existence, is it any wonder that people—women—would choose to embrace even fleeting pleasure and reassurance of life?

Western cultures have long been quick to condemn “bad” sexual behavior and to suggest that consequences like sexually transmitted diseases are no more than what a woman who would engage in these activities deserves. Motsemme’s quiet compassion and heartfelt empathy were as powerful as the stories she told in refuting this idea, asking her listeners to imagine themselves in a township African life, to consider what choices they would make in a scenario so different from their lived experiences.



Program Director Dr. Margaret Jacobs and Colloquium Speaker Dr. Carleen Sanchez (UNL)

Dr. Carleen Sanchez Lecture

“Producing Docile Bodies: Indigenous Women and Eurocentric Feminism”

By Rachael Robinson-Keilig, Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology

Dr. Sanchez’s talk centered on women in Latin America and the problems of blindly applying “western” feminist theory and solutions for these women. Women in Latin America live in much different cultural, political and religious environments which make applying western feminist ideas difficult and not always in the best interest of these women. Dr. Sanchez points out that there is no single “third world” woman and too often our discussion about women in developing countries makes assumptions that there is one single image that represents all of the women in Latin America and other third world countries.

For example, Dr. Sanchez discussed the *casta* system that is an integral part of the history of many Latin American countries. The *casta* system was a hierarchical system of identifying classes of people with specific racial or ethnic backgrounds and with each caste there was a set of identified privileges and restrictions. While no longer practiced, the *casta* system was a central part of the culture for so long that one must take this history into account when working with women from Latin America. Can western feminism which developed within its own complex set of historical and political climates, apply to women in other countries and with such different histories? Do the tenets of western feminism even apply to women in Latin America?

More recently women in Latin America have become a targeted population, in that international corporations are moving their factories and sweat shops into rural areas in order to tap the cheap and compliant labor pool of indigenous women. However, before we assume a solution to this problem and identify a course of action based on western feminist ideas, Dr. Sanchez asks us to take a step back and listen to the indigenous women in these areas. Find out what is important to these women and what their needs are for their families and community. The answer will most likely be different than what we think.

SAGE Announcements:

This semester SAGE (Students Advocating Gender Equity):

- ***formalized their name change (formerly WSA);***
- ***held a T-Shirt fundraiser;***
- ***started a feminist journal fundraiser;***
- ***and participated in the Dining Out for Life event for the Nebraska AIDS Project.***

Faculty Achievements

Susan Belasco of the English Department is the co-editor of *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature*, Volumes 1 and 2, published this year by Bedford/St. Martin's. Belasco explains that working with her many students in her introduction to women's literature classes at UNL greatly informed the selections that became a part of this new anthology. She is also the editor of "Walt Whitman's Poems in Periodicals," a new part of the Walt Whitman Archive, www.whitmanarchive.org. Belasco is on a faculty development leave this year and looks forward to returning to UNL in the fall.

The Classics Department's **Sydney White Crawford** received the W. F. Albright Service Award from the American Schools of Oriental Research in November, 2006.

Mary Jo Deegan of the Sociology Department has a new book in press, *Self, War, and Society: The Macrosociology of George Herbert Mead* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press). This book presents Mead's theory of war and peace prior to, during, and after World War I., and provides significant comparisons with Jane Addams and John Dewey's ideas and work on peace and war.

Kalenda Eaton of the English Department was awarded (but regrettably declined) a Fulbright Fellowship to Dakar, Senegal for the 2007-2008 academic year. The fellowship (at Cheikh Anta Diop University) would have allowed her to teach courses

in American Literature and Black Women's Literature in the Department of English and also research the history of feminist literature written by Senegalese women. She plans to further this research in the near future.

The Department of Geosciences' **Mary Anne Holmes** and Wesleyan's Suzanne O'Connell received a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to form a network of aspiring women geoscientists in New England. This will be a pilot program that they hope to enlarge in geographic scope. The network will be initiated by a series of professional development workshops for young women geoscientists and departmental climate workshops for geoscience department chairs. A brief outline of their work appeared in the March 15 "Recruiters" column in the journal *Nature*.

WGS Associate Director **Rose Holz** was again awarded the Certificate of Recognition for Contributions to Students from UNL's Parents' Association and the Teaching Council of the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

The English Department's **Melissa Homestead** received a Maude Hammon Fling Travel Fellowship from the Research Council. She will use the funds to travel to New York and Boston in late May to research the career of 19th-century novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick. She will be traveling to France in June to participate in the International Cather Seminar, where she will present a paper on the career of Edith Lewis (Willa

Cather's partner) as an editor of *Every Week* magazine.

Jeannette Jones of the History Department has received a Deutsche Bank Junior Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies in Heidelberg, Germany for the 2007-08 academic year.

Chantal Kalisa of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures published "Theatre and the Rwandan Genocide" in the *Peace Review* (October-December 2006).

The Sociology Department's **Helen Moore** is the recently elected President of the Midwest Sociological Society and organized an April 2007 conference for 1500 attendees in Chicago. She organized a series of sessions that highlighted regional feminist researchers, with each campus presenting a panel of faculty and graduate student work

in progress. She and her Sociology Education Team have an article accepted at the *Journal of Higher Education* on the professional and emotional impact on faculty and instructors of color who teach required diversity courses on the college campus.

The English Department's **Hilda Raz** has published, with her son Aaron Raz Link, *What Becomes You* through the University of Nebraska Press, American Lives Series. A memoir in two voices, the book covers Aaron's sex change and the social, familial, and medical responses to his transsexuality.

We will miss **Kalenda Eaton** (English) and **Jenn Hunt** (Psychology) who are both leaving UNL this semester. Please join us in thanking them for all their service to the WGS program.

Student News and Alumnae/i Updates

Angeline Petak (Senior, Biological Sciences, Anthropology, and Women's and Gender Studies) has been awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to study in Lusaka, Zambia (Africa) for the 2008 school year. She will begin a Masters curriculum in Public Health at the University of Zambia while doing research.

Three of our students participated in UCARE's 2007 Undergraduate Research Conference to present posters related to their projects: **Jillian Savage** (Senior, English Major, WGS Minor) presented "House Romance Salad with Vignette Dressing," supervised by Dr. Rose Holz; **Azure Wall** (Senior, WGS Major, English, History, and GLBTQ Minor) presented "WhodunWHAT? An Examination of Gender Performance and Same Sex Affection in the Trixie Belden Mysteries," supervised by Dr. Barbara DiBernard; and **Erica Wright** (Senior, English and Pre-med Major, WGS Minor) will graduate with honors this May after the successful completion of her honors thesis titled "Carnage and Carnality: Gender and Corporeality in the Modern Horror Film". This thesis was the culmination of her UCARE project supervised by Dr. Carole Levin.

The WGS faculty and staff would like to thank **Ryan Fette** for volunteering his time to help us repot our plants and keep our offices beautiful.

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Activist Roundtable

Featuring:

- **Dr. Maria Prendes-Lintel (FIRST Project)**
- **Ms. Carmela Sánchez de Jiménez (El Centro de las Americas)**
- **Ms. Ingrid Kirst (Community CROPS)**



By Chelsea Hammond, Senior, English and WGS Major

The community activist roundtable event related to how we define global feminism. All organizations represented at the roundtable are relatively new, indicative of the “newness” of the global feminist movement itself. The activists expressed the global feminist consciousness of connectedness which deconstructs traditional notions of superiority and hierarchy between cultures. All said they were amazed, honored, and even humbled by the resilience of the immigrants or refugees with whom they work. “They came here to go on with their lives,” explained Dr. Maria Prendes-Lintel. “They did not come here to be ill and they did not come here to be dependent,” Dr. Carmela Sánchez de Jiménez added.

To be an activist feminist with a global consciousness is to have the humility to recognize that a teacher is simultaneously a student. A woman who has been raped and tortured, who has come to Nebraska and does not speak English is not weak. She is a survivor. The “teacher,” the activist, can learn much from her. In order even to begin to teach English, for example, one must learn the native language of the “student.” As a therapist, Dr. Maria uses a “collaborative model,” telling her patients, “I have expertise in this area but you have expertise in your life.” Rather than simply prescribing a standard method of recovery, Dr. Maria works collaboratively with each patient to find solutions which are compatible with the patient’s culture. To be an effective “cultural broker” one must realize that within each culture are numerous individual variations. No uniform solution can be applied to every Mexican woman or to every Cuban woman.

Dr. Maria also pointed out that when evaluating an immigrant psychologically, one cannot employ any of the traditional tests because they are based on a Western standard of “normality” in which other cultures cannot be placed. The challenges that immigrants face are numerous and are only compounded by a lack of support within traditional medical and legal institutions that are not prepared to serve diverse populations. “If we want to be more supportive to immigrants in our area we need to look at our systems.” Dr. Maria explained that many individuals enter the FIRST project after first undergoing mistreatment, and even misdiagnoses by in the medical community. “They don’t know what to ask and they don’t know what to treat.”

Ingrid Kirst discussed Community CROPS’s efforts to provide garden space for refugees and immigrants in the community. Many refugee women in our community, including those from Somalia, had been farmers in their home countries. Through CROPS they are able to grow vegetables they can’t find in the stores that keep them connected to their homelands. Dr. Maria and Ingrid also mentioned that many refugee women who have suffered torture and other traumas also find solace and healing in the gardens.

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From the Director

I organized a delegation to visit Barbara Couture, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Dean Hoffmann of the College of Arts and Sciences to request more permanent funding. As a result, Dean Hoffmann of the College of Arts and Sciences has granted us a permanent annual teaching budget that will fund most of our classes. We are very grateful for the support of and commitment to our program by Dean Hoffman and Vice Chancellor Couture.

In addition to our behind-the-scenes work to stabilize our program, we have been busy this spring with:

- the 2007 “No Limits” student conference (about which you will hear more throughout the newsletter);
- our Colloquium Series on Globalization and International Issues;
- a visit from Big 12 Faculty Exchange scholar Rebecca Dingo, a professor of Women’s Studies and English at the University of Missouri, Columbia;
- meetings of our Working Group on International Women’s and Gender Issues (which I like to think of as *Feminists Without Borders*);
- development of new guidelines for our requirements by the Curriculum Committee, and showcasing our recent work at a poster session for recipients of ITLE grants.

Next year Women’s and Gender Studies will celebrate our 30th anniversary. Through our regular events, like the colloquium series, we plan to spend the entire year honoring our past and envisioning our future. At the end of the year, we will have a full-scale birthday party. If you would like to help plan this year of events, please e-mail me at mjacobs3@unl.edu or call 472-9300.

WGS Advisory Board:

A special thanks to these WGS faculty and students for helping to run our program in 2006-2007:

- Kwakiutl Dreher**
- Mary Anne Holmes**
- Melissa Homestead**
- Jeannette Jones**
- Chantal Kalisa**
- Margaret Latta**
- Oksana Yakushko**
- Bronwyn Milliken (Undergraduate)**
- Rachael Robinson-Keilig (Graduate)**

A SAGE Perspective on “No Limits” and Amy Miller

By Dene’ Oglesby, SAGE member, UNL Undergraduate



Keynote Speaker Amy Miller (Legal Director of Nebraska’s ACLU)

As a member of the Students Advocating for Gender Equity (SAGE) group, formerly the Women’s Studies Association, I had the opportunity to volunteer for the 2007 No Limits Conference and attend several events. I presented on a panel along with Lisa Lux, Chris Jones, Chelsea Hammond and Morgan Beal about research and activism in the field of Women’s and Gender Studies. This was my first experience presenting at a conference and it was a wonderful experience!

Amy Miller from ACLU Nebraska was the closing speaker at Saturday’s luncheon. She discussed LB 571, which would make it legal in Nebraska for any two people to adopt a child, regardless of their marital status. Part of Amy’s moving speech was a story about a little girl who recently testified at one of the legislative hearings about how she thinks it’s great to have two mothers and how she didn’t understand why anyone would think it would be better for only one parent to take care of her.

The Q&A portion following the speech turned into a discussion of various gender and sexual orientation discrimination. Amy further discussed how each aspect of “The Personal, the Political, and the Patriotic” can be put into action to create a better world (although our struggle isn’t without its fair share of bureaucracy).

In between sessions, SAGE members took turns staffing our booth where we sold t-shirts as a fundraiser and shared our new journal: “Well, F-me...I’m a Feminist!” It was exciting to see such a positive response to our publication. We are hoping the journal will be more widely available in the next month. Our hope is that it will become a product of the Lincoln community rather than a college-only paper. If you are interested in a copy or have something to submit, we have a submission box in the UNL Women’s Center or you can email us at imafeminist@gmail.com.

“No Limits” Keynote Speaker: tatiana de la tierra

By Ryan Fette, Senior, International Studies Major



Dr. Amelia Montes (UNL) and Keynote Speaker tatiana de la tierra (poet, artist, scholar)

tatiana de la tierra gave a keynote address at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery on Friday, March 30 for the “No Limits” Women’s and Gender Studies conference. In keeping with the theme of the Personal, the Political, and the Patriotic, the presentation was titled “Dreaming of Lesbos in Times of Holy Terror.” De la tierra described her experiences as a Columbian immigrant, lesbian woman existing in a post-9/11 America. She wove her poetry into the fabric of her experiences. She made the important assertion that “Your acts show your allegiance.”

An excellent example of her discussion of her analysis of the intersection of identities comes from her essay Real Women:

“But with women I was a lesbian, not a woman. My lesbian training ground took place among white lesbian separatists who were vegetarians, feminists, and witches. The Birkenstock-flannel-shirt-granola types. I emphasize this cultural aspect because I am Colombian, an immigrant in this country, and I had not found a way to come out while in Miami, living with mi familia. I enjoyed being a hippie girl, so much of the lesbian dogma was comfortable to me; the problem was that it seemed that there were only certain things that I was allowed to be, and many that I wasn’t, in order to be a dyke.”

Her previous publications include *Píntame Una Mujer Peligrosa*, *For the Hard Ones: A Lesbian Phenomenology/Para Las Duras: Una Fenomenología Lesbiana*, *Porcupine Love*, and *Tales from My Papaya*. Some of her work is available online at www.delatierra.net.



Conference Planners Melissa Swihart (WGS Graduate Assistant), Dr. Rose Holz (WGS Associate Director), and Colleen McBride (UCARE Student)

Congratulations to our graduates!

Majors: Please join us for our Graduation Reception and Awards Ceremony where we will honor our graduates and this year's award and scholarship winners!

Christine Black
Morgan Beal (August)
Chelsea Hammond
Jenni Hoemann
Angeline Petak
Amy Winkenwerder

Graduate

Specialization:

HarmoniJoie Noel
Jessica Rivera (August)
Christine Stuart-Nuñez

Minors:

Erin Bain
Leslie Dickey
Ryan Fette
Travis Groves
Alison MacDonald
Jacqueline McKinney
Jillian Savage
Megumi Watanabe
Erica Wright

Friday, April 27, 2007
3:30-5:00 @ the City Union
(room to be posted)



For more information please visit our home on the web
www.unl.edu/womenssp

There you can find information about the major/minor/graduate specialization requirements for students, our class description booklet, our video library list, faculty bios, details on our scholarships and awards, and much more!

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